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EXCISE

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THURSDAY
MARCH 4, 1954

Frenzied activity at the office this morning. At 11:30 I went over to Margaret Biddle's and met René Pleven. He says the Indo-China debate, which will commence tomorrow, will be most difficult. The advocates of a peace negotiation with Ho Chi Min will do their best to have the Chamber attempt to bring about such conversations before the Geneva Conference. He observed that as long as the Chinese border remains open there can be no decisive military solution there. As regards EDC, he had talked to Laniel yesterday and the latter had assured him he intended to start the debate before the Easter holidays.

I had lunch with André de Staercke at his apartment at 86, rue de Grenelle. Henri Spaak, John Hughes, and Rothschild (of André's staff) were there. Spaak was in fine form and said if Laniel will bring the Treaty to a vote he will win, but not as easily as he would have last autumn.

Sir Christopher Steel came to see me. Meanwhile, Achilles had been summoned to the Quai, where Maurice Schumann and Alphand expressed their concern over the Callender article and asked for a U.S. denial that this was official policy. Such a denial will not, I hope, be forthcoming since Callender's article was correct in its interpretation of the American position.

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THURSDAY
MARCH 4, 1954

81-EB

Ridge Knight and I went out to see Al Gruenther at six o'clock. He is leaving tomorrow for Washington with Senators Bridges and Symington. Laurie

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Norstad and Cort Schuyler were there. Al said he had spent two hours this afternoon listening to Marshal Juin's bitter attacks on the EDC Treaty. He added that the higher officers of the French Army were almost unanimous in their opposition to the Treaty, largely on the grounds it would destroy their national army, of whose traditions they are so proud. I told him what I knew of the Governmental and Parliamentary situation, and we are in full accord that, from the American standpoint, we must play out our hand.

Back at the office, we found that, during a conversation between Tommy and Alphand, Alphand had retreated from his position and had abandoned hopes of negotiating with us on U. S. assurances. He had, however, given Tommy a draft by Bidault of the language in this respect that would be most useful to him in a French parliamentary debate.

We are sending this to Washington with the recommendation that, so far as it can be properly incorporated in their declaration, this should be done. I am very concerned over Washington's most recent drafts, which have resulted in a watered down statement that I think unsatisfactory. Tomorrow we will have to consider communicating with Messrs. Gruenther and Bedell Smith on that subject and see whether they cannot get still another revision accomplished.

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